



Abujhmad Region

Why in News?

Amid efforts to eliminate **Maoist influence by 2026**, the development of **Abujhmad in Chhattisgarh** raises concerns on sustainable growth, tribal rights, and Maoist influence in the region.

Key Points

- **About the Abujhmad Region:**
 - The name **Abujhmad** means '*incomprehensible plateau*' in Hindi and is understood as '*sal forest*' in the Gondi language.
 - **Abujhmadiya tribes:** As per the 2011 Census, Abujhmad is inhabited by about 40,000 Abujhmadiya tribals, who are a subgroup of the **Gond tribe**.
 - They are recognised as one of the seven **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** in Chhattisgarh.
- **Historical Context:**
 - Under British rule, it was categorised as an '**excluded area**' under the **Government of India Act, 1935**.
 - After independence, its remoteness and lack of development allowed Maoists to use it as an unofficial headquarters, calling it a '**liberated zone**'.
- **Government's Plan to Reclaim Abujhmad:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced Maoist **elimination by March 2026**, with plans to boost connectivity through new roads, facilities, and expanded iron ore mining into core forest areas.
- **Concerns Over Rights and Law:**
 - **Forest and Habitat Rights:**
 - The **Forest Rights Act, 2006**, grants special rights to forest-dwelling communities, including habitat rights.
 - In 2019, when Abujhmadiyas attempted to claim these rights, they faced Maoist threats and lack of state support.
 - **Cultural and Religious Importance:**
 - Verwakot hill inside Abujhmad holds great significance in Gondi religious beliefs as the starting point of human life.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)

- **About the PVTGs:** They are the most vulnerable among India's tribal communities.
 - Because more developed tribes often secure a larger share of development resources, PVTGs require special attention and targeted support.
 - In 1973, the **Dhebar Commission** identified **Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)** as the least developed tribes; this category was renamed **PVTGs** in 2006.
 - The Government of India identified 52 such groups in 1975 and added 23 more in 1993, totaling 75 PVTGs out of 705 **Scheduled Tribes**.
 - PVTGs are typically small, homogenous, geographically isolated, with simple technology, unwritten languages, and slow socio-economic progress.
 - **Odisha** has the **highest number of PVTGs** in the country.
- **Government Support:**

- The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** runs the *Development of PVTGs* scheme, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with 100% central funding for 18 states and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
 - The scheme aims for the holistic socio-economic development of PVTGs while preserving their unique culture and traditions.
 - It supports projects in education, health, and livelihoods, tailored to their specific needs.

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